



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## BENJAMIN J. WEST.

The funeral of Benjamin J. West, retired Belleville business man, farmer and banker, who celebrated his one hundredth birthday anniversary at his summer home at Minneapolis, Minn., August 23, last, was held at the First Methodist Church at Belleville, at 2:00 p. m., Saturday, November 9, 1912.

The body of Mr. West arrived in Belleville Friday night. It was taken to the home of Robert C. West, son of the dead centenarian, and later was moved to the First Church, where it laid in state. The funeral was in charge of Rev. T. C. Ragsdale, pastor, and Dr. O. H. Clark of East St. Louis, a lifelong friend of Mr. West.

Dr. Clark delivered the funeral address and paid Mr. West a high tribute. At the close of Dr. Clark's eulogy, Benjamin J. West, Jr., a son, spoke.

Burial was in Green Mountain cemetery, two miles east of Belleville.

Mr. West was in the enjoyment of good health at the time of the Madison County Centennial celebration in September, 1912, and he wrote a long and interesting letter to the Edwardsville Intelligencer which was published in full in the Centennial Edition of that paper.

The following extracts are from Mr. West's letter:

A number of my family connections, including my grandfather, my father and his family, left Virginia in the year 1818, and located in St. Clair County, Illinois. At that time I was six years of age, born on my father's plantation near Fincastle, county seat of Botetourt County, Va., August 23, 1812, a memorable year in our country's history. One of the reasons, if not the prime cause, for leaving their comfortable estate in the old Dominion state, was the desire to become citizens of a free state.

My first visit to and knowledge of Edwardsville and acquaintance with its inhabitants was in the year 1821, then it was but a little village. The few houses, as I remember, were mostly built of logs covered with hand split clapboards cut from the oak trees which were abundant. Many of these unpretentious cabins were later weatherboarded which in those days gave the appearance of more attractive and comfortable homes. At this early day, however, the village and county were inhabited by

noble and worthy pioneers. Edwardsville was one of the most important points in that vast section of country as most of the territory north of that point was occupied, inhabited and claimed by the Indians as their hunting grounds.

My brother, Edward M. West, married Miss Julia Atwater of Edwardsville in the year 1835. Miss Atwater was the daughter of Joshua Atwater, one of the pioneer merchants of that section, and I will here note the fact and incident that Mr. Atwater brought to southern Illinois the first cooking stoves ever seen in that part of the country.

Among the early friendships that I formed in the little village was with that good and noble Ninian Edwards who was the first territorial Governor of Illinois, appointed in 1809 by President Madison. I was a great admirer of Governor Edwards and although he was many years older, I always found pleasure in his society. The Governor afterwards moved to Belleville and it was my privilege to be with him often during his last sickness and was with him at his deathbed in 1833. Among the many other good men of Madison County that I knew in those early days I will mention Isaac Prickett, a merchant; the Gillhams, Whitesides, Rev. Samuel H. Thompson and Rev. John Dow, the Randles, Moores, Skidmores, Jobs, Wicks, Millers, Barnsbacks, Joseph and Matthew Gillespie, Judys, Buckmasters, Morrisons, Krafft, Dr. Wier, A. W. Metcalf, and Rev. John Hogan, who married my sister Mary. To the Whitesides and Gillhams the credit of laying the foundation of Madison County was due.

Judge Joseph Gillespie was a jurist of fine legal mind and natural talents, and for many years I enjoyed his friendship. During the Civil War he and I visited President Lincoln at Washington whom we had known well in his earlier life in Springfield. Judge Gillespie served with Lincoln in the Black Hawk war. I had visited Washington in earlier days where I had met Presidents John Quincy Adams, Andrew Jackson, Martin Van Buren, and the great statesmen, Henry Clay and Daniel Webster. It was my pleasure to attend the inaugural ceremonies of President William Henry Harrison and hear his inaugural address at the capitol March 4, 1841. President Harrison upon that occasion caught a severe cold and died one month later.

My brother Edward M. West, was born in Botetourt County, Virginia, May 2, 1814. He left St. Clair County soon after his marriage. I would be pardoned in the expression that my brother possessed a strong and forceful character. Casting his lot in Edwardsville merchandising for some years, then engaged in the banking business, to which he seemed naturally adapted. His moral worth, success and record in life

is well known to the present generation of Madison County. Of his immediate family but two daughters survive him, Mrs. Mary West Hadley, of Edwardsville and Mrs. O. L. Taylor, of St. Paul, Minn.

In speaking of the early days of Madison County, I must not forget that historic settlement of Goshen, a short distance south of Edwardsville, which was settled in 1802. It was here that the first camp meetings were held on the premises of a Mr. Good, in 1807. These meetings were early presided over by that gifted and good man, Bishop Wm. McKendree and later assisted in this religious work by my grandfather, Rev. Edward Mitchell, and his brother, Samuel Mitchell, both conscientious Christian men who gave much of their time and services to the betterment of their fellowmen.